



# COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown District

Vol. 67 March 2010, Scottsdale Police Department District II; 3700 N. 75<sup>th</sup> St. Scottsdale, AZ 85257 (480) 312-2594



## Crimes of Opportunity

Are you inadvertently providing opportunities for criminals? Many crimes occur because simple steps have not been taken toward preventing them. Most criminals want easy targets and the ability to go unnoticed. "Target hardening" does not have to be expensive and may discourage a criminal from choosing you for their next victim. It can be as simple as locking a door.

**Vehicle Crimes:** Never leave valuables visible in your car. Always close your and lock your windows and doors. If you have a vehicle alarm, make sure it is armed. Park your car in your garage if you have one, and never leave the garage door opener in your vehicle. Consider the use of a "club" or other device as a visible deterrent to auto theft. Consider joining the "Watch your Car" program.

**Residential Crimes:** Focus on Locks, Lighting, and Landscaping. Always keep doors and windows locked. This includes securing patio doors and sliding windows with a dowel or thumb screws in the track. Lighting at night is the number one deterrent to crime. Make sure all exterior lights are working and provide uniform lighting without dark spots. Consider the use of motion sensors. Your front entry light should provide enough light so you can identify someone outside your door. Never open your door to anyone you do not know. Landscaping that covers window could provide a criminal with concealment. Trees should be trimmed so the lowest branches are at least six to eight feet high and shrubs should be no taller than three feet or higher than the window sill. Trim the base in a "V" shape.

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## From The Desk Of Commander Johnny Cervantes

### To VIN Etch or not...that is the question.

VIN etching is the process of placing the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on every piece of glass on a vehicle. The first step of this process is to make labels that contain the VIN on a Dot Matrix Printer. The labels are then placed on the glass of the vehicle, followed by the application of a chemical solution. The label is then removed leaving the VIN etched on the glass.

What are the advantages of placing the vehicle VIN on all the glass of a vehicle?

- When a vehicle is VIN etched it allows us as law enforcement officers to see the VIN in several locations and not just the dash of the vehicle.
- It makes it difficult for the bad guy to VIN switch a vehicle since all the glass would have to be replaced to get rid of the original vehicle identity.
- Some Insurance companies will give you a discount for having your vehicle VIN etched.
- This is another layer in the prevention of Auto Theft.

One of the concerns some people have about VIN etching is that the criminal will have access to the VIN and be able to get a key made.

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Close and lock perimeter gates. There have been several burglaries in the City related to alley access. Once a burglar gets into your back yard there is a lot less chance of being seen by a watchful neighbor. SPD offers free security surveys to all residents. Call your crime prevention officer to schedule yours today

**Personal Safety:** Walk with confidence. Be alert, look around, and be aware of your surroundings. Carry purses and bags close to your body, and never leave them unattended. Have your keys out and ready when walking to your vehicle. If you don't feel comfortable, ask for an escort from security or police. Exercise in highly populated areas. Remember there is safety in numbers. SPD offers free interactive self-awareness classes at least twice a year. Consider enrolling in one to increase your personal safety knowledge.

Always shred your personal documents to help prevent identity theft. SPD hosts at least two shredding events in your part of the City each year. Be aware of scams and frauds. The old adage of "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is" is truer now more than ever. A current scam we are seeing is the Grandparent Scam. A call is received from a caller in Canada claiming they are their grandchild, and in need money to get out of jail and get home. There have been at least five Scottsdale residents who have fallen victim to this scam. The average take has been several thousand dollars. Don't fall victim to lottery, found property, and check overpayment schemes. Never give personal information to anyone on the telephone or computer unless you have initiated the contact.

If you are the victim of a crime: *PLEASE* report it. It may be crucial to identifying a crime trend. Resources are allocated based on the number and types of crimes in an area.

Remember as much as you can by writing it down, this will make you a great witness. The more information you can provide officers, the better chance we have of making an arrest. Keep a record of serial numbers for your important property and put it in a safe place. Take pictures and/or video of valuable jewelry and electronics on an annual basis.

Finally, we strongly recommend participating in the neighborhood watch program. If you do not have a neighborhood watch group in your community, consider starting one. There is no better crime deterrent than neighbors looking out for each other. You know (often times better than the police) who belongs in your neighborhood and who doesn't. Please report all suspicious activity; we want to hear from you!

While the bad guy has access to the VIN, dealerships that are reputable will require the person requesting a new key to produce a valid form of identification as well as proof of ownership for the vehicle prior, to making the key.

So to answer the question to VIN etch or not? Let's make it more difficult for the bad guy to get rid of the vehicle identity and easier for law enforcement to identify vehicles where the VIN is difficult to read or see.

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For more information on crime prevention or additional opportunities to get involved in YOUR community contact Crime Prevention Officer Craig Abernethy at 480-312-2594, email: [cabernethyr@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:cabernethyr@scottsdaleaz.gov), or District 1 Police Aide Randee Short at 480-312-2074, email: [rshort@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:rshort@scottsdaleaz.gov).

## Upcoming Events

### Apartment Alliance Meeting March 18<sup>th</sup> 2010:

Managers, join us for lunch on Thursday March 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:30-12:30 at 8401 E. Indian School RD.

### Shredding Event March 20, 2010:

SPD is partnering with Scottsdale Baptist Church to bring a Shredding and Drug Collection for Destruction Event. The event will be Sat March 20<sup>th</sup> from 9-noon. Donations per box will be accepted to benefit Family Promise

### Public Safety Event April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010:

Shredding, Drug Collection, VIN Etching, Child Seat Installation and much, much more!! April 24<sup>th</sup> from 9 to noon at Coronado H.S. SPD is partnering with State Farm Insurance, to bring this AWESOME Event.

## Public Safety Community Contact Numbers and E-mail Links

- **Scottsdale Police Non-Emergency** 480-312-5000
- **Scottsdale Fire Department** 480-312-8000
- **SPD Drug Enforcement Hotline** - Suspected illegal activity, 480-312-TIPS (Hot lines are not monitored)
- **SPD Traffic Enforcement Hotline** - chronic traffic problems, 480-312-CARS
- **Code Enforcement** 480-312-2546
- **Child Safety Seat Installation** 480-312-BABY
- **CPR/First Aid Classes** 480-312-1817